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Digital technology access among patients with chronic respiratory diseases

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Abstract

Pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) is an evidence-based intervention to manage chronic respiratory diseases (CRD), but its benefits diminish over time. Web-based approaches may have a key-role in supporting patients to comply with their maintenance action plan, if familiarity with this technology exist. This study explored if patients with CRD have access to digital technology and if they feel confident in using it.

This was a cross-sectional study with patients referred to community-based PR programs. Patients were surveyed regarding the use of the internet, computers, smartphones/tablets and cell phones. Their confidence in using these technologies was assessed using a scale from 0 (not at all confident) to 10 (completely confident). Patients were considered confident when a score >5 was selected. A multivariate logistic regression to predict use of internet was performed using the Enter method.

141 patients (61% male; 67±11y) were included. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (60%) and asthma (18%) were the most common diagnoses. Most patients (n=115; 81.6%) used digital technology, namely smartphone/tablets (44%), computers (38%) and cell phones (37%). 114 (81%) patients reported to be confident in using these devices (Median-M 7, Interquartile-IQR 5-9.5). More than half (n=75; 53%) used the internet and 85% of them felt confident in using it (M 8, IQR 5.75-10). Lower age (odds ratio-OR=.935; 95%CI .889-.982) and

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